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50X1-HUM

INFORMATION REPORT INFORMATION REPORT

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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COUNTRY Czechoslovakia

SUBJECT Classifications of Uranium Ore

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Kinds of ore

1. The general information about uranium ore is taken from the Jachymov, the Horni Slavkov, and the Pribram areas. The term officially used for uranium ore is merely "ore" (ruda), but several kinds of ore are included under it, according to radioactivity and color. 50X1-HUM

2. Pitchblende (smolka - the correct term being smolinec) is the purest ore, black, red, green, yellow, and gray in color. Its specific weight is approximately the same as that of iron, and it is found in the form of fine dust (called powdery pitchblende - mastna smolka) in blisters in stone (so-called kidney stones - ledvinkova smolka) and as solid hard rock, looking and gleaming like metal. Pitchblende is found in pockets in veins, of various sizes, the maximum size being 10 m. long, 7 m. high, and 30 cm. thick. Small pockets (called nalepky-flat seams) are more frequent, 1 mm. to 1 cm. thick, 1 m. long, and 80 cm. high. These seams frequently pass into what is called "ore".

3. Ore, the general term for radioactive material in the broadest sense, denotes a vein containing radioactive matter running through the mines. Ore is mined in the largest quantities and is of various colors, according to the kind of rock in which it is found. It is sorted, according to the strength of its radioactivity, in the sorting rooms, of which there is one at each pit, and is taken in crates by truck to Elias mine and the Vykmanov CTK (Expert-Technical Control) where it is crushed and the pure pitchblende washed in water.

4. Radioactive material, marked by the letters "A" and "U", is material which has been in immediate contact with ore and pitchblende and has thus become radioactive. Type "A" is strongly radioactive and closely resembles radioactive ore. Type "U" is very slightly radioactive and was formerly thrown out onto the slag heap, whence it is now being removed and processed. Dead rock, in the floor or walls, may become radioactive as the result of

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incorrect extraction of the ore, when the ore is blasted or drilled out with a pneumatic hammer, and pitchblende or ore gets onto the floor or walls in the form of particles.

Wages for mining ore

5. Pure pitchblende is paid for according to its radioactivity, the wage being up to eight crowns per kilogram. Immediately after it is mined, it must be put into special metal barrels, about the size of American gasoline cans, and it is taken to the surface in these.

6. The wage for mining ore is 80 hellers per kilogram. After it is mined, it is put either into trucks intended especially for ore or into large barrels. A truck containing 0.75 cubic meters weighs on an average 800 to 1,000 kg., the weight depending on the radioactivity and moistness of the ore. The wage is a standard one, although kilograms are deducted in a certain proportion to the total weight to offset watering the ore or crushing it into dead material. The amount deducted per truck is estimated at 300 kg.

7. The wage for mining radioactive material of type "A" is 20 hellers per kilogram. As this wage is so low, both the prisoners and the free workers working in the mines have adopted the practice of mixing crushed pitchblende with this material in order to increase its radioactivity to that of ore. This is done in defiance of the Jachymov Mines regulations which punish the debasement of ore with sentences of up to 10 years' imprisonment. The mixing is done at the mine face with homemade crushers looking like rather large mortars which work on the principle of the pneumatic hammer. The crushers are washed out with water after use in order to prevent their discovery by the authorities with the aid of Geiger counters.

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